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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, AUGUST 7, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Sezer Approves Seventh Harmonization Package -Hurriyet
Barzani: PKK Should Return Home - Milliyet
Return Home Begins - Sabah
Interior Minister: 5,000 PKK Preparing to Return Home -
Milliyet
Petkim Privatization Cancelled - Hurriyet
Uzan Group Refuses to Pay for Petkim, Tender Dropped -
Milliyet

OPINION MAKERS

Approval from Cankaya for the Seventh Package - Radikal
Giant Step for civilianized politics: Sezer Approves Seventh
Package - Zaman
Government brings 'Headscarf' to Higher Education -
Cumhuriyet
2 PKK/KADEK Militants Return Home Through Habur - Yeni Safak
Returning Home Starts With Speed - Radikal
Petkim Sale to Uzans Cancelled - Yeni Safak
Uzan Group Unable to Pay for Petkim - Zaman

BRIEFING

Approval of the Seventh Harmonization Package: President
Sezer approved the seventh harmonization package yesterday,
a move described by most papers as a large step toward
democratization. With the approval of the package, the
military's influence over Turkey's politics will be limited.
"Zaman" reports that the approval takes Turkey closer to the
EU. "Milliyet" notes that the military had expected Sezer
to veto the package, and that the president signed the
package despite the open opposition of the NSC Secretary
General. "Vatan" argues that the approval of the seventh
package has transformed the NSC into an advisory body. The
NSC will convene every two months instead of once per month,
and the council will only have the authority to make
recommendations on national security issues. With this
package, freedom of thought is expanded and penalties for
insulting the state and state officials are reduced. The
package also supports judicial action against torture, and
stipulates that civilians can no longer be tried in military
courts.

Response to the Repentance Law: "Hurriyet" reports that 2
PKK/KADEK militants surrendered in Iraq, and 80 other
members of terrorist organizations applied to Turkish
security forces in Turkey to benefit from the repentance law
on the first day of its application. Special centers have
been established in Van, Sirnak and Kirlareli for the
surrendering militants. Interior Minister Aksu said that
around 5,000 PKK/KADEK militants in Northern Iraq are
expected to apply to benefit from the amnesty. Meanwhile,
"Hurriyet" reports that yesterday PKK militants attacked a
police station in Mardin, killing two policeman. Turkish
officials claim that anti-amnesty militants were responsible
for this attack. In an interview with El-Cezire TV, KDP
leader Barzani urged all PKK militants in northern Iraq to
return to Turkey.
Cancellation of PETKIM Bid: All papers report that the
Privatization Administration has cancelled the sale of state-
owned PETKIM to the Uzan group. After court decisions

against the Uzan family in Switzerland and the United States opened the way for a freeze of the family's assets abroad, the Uzans were unable to pay the agreed \$605 million for PETKIM. A new tender will now be required for the company's privatization.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq

"Strengthening Baghdad"

Erdal Safak opined in the mass appeal Sabah (8/7): "Turkey once again has a chance to prevent undesirable developments from taking place in Iraq. . There are some facts that Turkey should take into consideration immediately. Current indications coming from Iraq do not give hope for the maintenance of Iraq's territorial integrity. There are many activists in northern Iraq who advocate an independent Kurdish state, and efforts are underway to move toward a referendum on the issue. For instance, the 'Kurdistan Journalists Federation' decided not to join the Iraqi Journalists Union, based on the that it is 'independent.' . Foreign Minister Gul has rightly underlined the importance of 'strengthening Baghdad.' There is only one way toward the strengthening of Baghdad, which is the presence of Turkish troops there. Turkey already missed its first chance, and now it has been given a second. It is very unlikely that there will be a third chance."

"Risk Analysis"

Fehmi Koru argued in the Islamist-intellectual Yeni Safak (8/7): "Iraq has turned into a quagmire, and Turkey should stay away from it. Yet there is no harm for Turkey in helping and advising others on how to 'dry the quagmire.' . Turkey's presence in Iraq should only be considered after the withdrawal of foreign troops and the handing of control to the United Nations. . The US so far has not shown any sign of change in its current policies in Iraq. Bremer, whose position is that of a typical 'occupation Governor' is not optimistic about cooperation with indigenous Iraqi groups. Washington is not very optimistic about Bremer's success either. . Turkey should not contribute to the ongoing occupation by sending its troops there. Instead, Turkey's mission should be designed to persuade the US and the UK to correct their mistakes. Both the US and UK should leave Iraq to the Iraqis, and leave the region to regional countries. It is in their best interests to withdraw from Iraq as soon as possible."

DEUTSCH